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STAR WARS

Part III

THE ASHES OF JEDHA

It is a period of high tension in the galaxy. The Galactic Empire has sent Queen Trios of Shu-Torun to Jedha in an attempt to collect the remaining weapon-powering kyber crystals that survived the Death Star's attack.

Meanwhile, Rebel leaders Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker, joined by smuggler Han Solo, have met with the surviving members of Saw Gerrera's Partisans. The group is led by the Tognath named Benthic, to whom the rebels offer supplies to help the natives' cause.

But when General Kanchar of the Empire drops an orbital drill onto the planet, destroying more homes of the struggling civilian survivors, the heroes of the Rebellion decide it's time to bring the fight to the Imperials....

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Jedha.
KLINK

BENTHIC, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO--
ENOUGH STARING, SKYWALKER. CAN YOU OPEN IT?

WHAT THE--?
GUARDS! QUICKLY!

WE'VE ONLY GOT A FEW MINUTES UNTIL COMPANY ARRIVES, BENTHIC.
YOU! LOWER THE SHIELD.
NO, I'LL NE--
ZZZAP
YOU, LOWER THE SHIELD.
PLEASE. I'M JUST A TECHNICIAN. I'M NOT EVEN AN IMPERIAL. I...
IT IS DONE. SKYWALKER-- SIGNAL THEM. IT IS TIME.

UBIN, ARE YOU WELL? I'M SORRY. I THOUGHT I RODE WITH THE FORCE...
FORGET IT, CHULCO. I GUESS YOU'RE RIDING ALONE, RIGHT?
HAN! LISTEN! THE GUNNERS ARE DISTRACTED! YOU'RE CLEAR FOR YOUR ATTACK.

OKAY, LISTEN TO ME, GIRL...
...IF YOU PULL OFF THIS RUN IN CONDITIONS AS BAD AS THIS, I SWEAR, I'LL GET YOU THE DEEP POLISH YOU DESERVE.
...ARE YOU SWEET-TALKING YOUR SHIP?
YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED IN DIPLOMACY AND SAVOIR FAIRE AND WHO KNOWS WHAT SINCE YOU WERE A KID, PRINCESS...
...BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HANDLE THE *FALCON*.
NOW, EYES FORWARD, AIM THE TORPEDOES AND HOPE LUKE AND TUBEFACE CAN GET OUT IN TIME.

THEY'RE COMING!
LET'S GO!
VERY WELL. YOUR ASSISTANCE WAS WELCOME, TECHNICIAN.
YOU...
I TOLD YOU. DO NOT STARE.
HAN! FIRE! NOW!

YAHOO!
"SIR...I AM SO SORRY. I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THE CITADEL MINE... HAS...BEEN...DESTROYED."

GENERAL KANCHAR... I...I...
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?! YOU LOOK PETRIFIED, MAN!
YOU THINK I'LL KILL YOU FOR A FAILURE?
EVERYONE FAILS OCCASIONALLY.
YOU'LL NEED TWO MORE FAILURES BEFORE I'D KILL YOU.
OR ONE PARTICULARLY INCOMPETENT FAILURE.
YOUR PEOPLE ARE WEAKLINGS, TRIOS.
THAT MINING CITADEL WAS OVERRUN IN MINUTES--
OH.
THAT... IS...
OUR FIRST EXCURSION WAS MERE PROLOGUE, KANCHAR.

The *Leviathan.*

THIS IS A *CONTINENT*-CLASS CRAWLER. WE USE IT FOR OFFWORLD EXCAVATIONS OF LOW-GRAVITY MOONS.

IT PEELS THE MANTLE WONDERFULLY.

HOW WILL YOU GET IT BACK TO ORBIT?

I DOUBT WE CAN. ITS DEPLOYMENT HERE IS A SIGN OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE.

HEH. LET'S SEE WHAT A FEW TORPEDOES DO AGAINST A MONSTER LIKE THAT.

I DON'T THINK IT'S A MONSTER, KANCHAR...

...AND IF IT IS, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL MONSTER.

SO, WE BEAT THE BAD GUYS, COME BACK HOME JUST IN TIME FOR A NICE LURK IN A DAMP CAVE...
...I GUESS THIS ISN'T A MEDALS-AND-PARADES KIND OF OUTFIT.
CHULCO... ARE YOU OKAY?
I SAW YOU GUYS GOT HIT.
THEY KILLED OUR STEED. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DODGE. I'VE NEVER BEEN SO CLUMSY. I...
I COULD SEE THINGS SO CLEARLY BEFORE. NOW ALL IS IN SHADOW.
I WAS BETTER THAN THIS. I SEE NO FUTURE. I AM LOST.
IT IS TIME TO COMPLETE MY PILGRIMAGE.
LUKE... COME WITH ME.

THE CULT OF THE CENTRAL ISOPTER--THEIR SHRINE OVERLOOKS THE VOID WHERE THE GREAT TEMPLE WAS.
THEY CAN HELP FIND OUR WAY THROUGH THE FOG OF OUR CONFUSION.
THEY'RE NOT JEDI. OR DISCIPLES, EVEN. OR--
BUT THEY ARE WISE IN THE FORCE...AND WHAT OTHER CHOICE IS THERE?
YOU'VE CONVINCED ME.
LET'S SEE WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.
LUKE! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M SORRY, LEIA. THERE'S SOME KIND OF TEMPLE.
I HAVE TO VISIT IT.
JEDI STUFF? NOW?
HOW CAN YOU BE SO IRRESPONSIBLE?
LEIA, IT'S IMPORTANT.
I'M SURE IT IS. BUT THERE'S ALL KINDS OF THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT...
HAVE I EVER TOLD YOU THE LAST WORDS MY FATHER SAID TO ME?
THEY WERE A MISSION BRIEFING.

...IN SHORT, WE RETRIEVE THE PLANS AND IT'S UP TO YOU TO GET THEM TO WHERE THEY NEED TO BE.
THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I'VE EVER ASKED OF YOU. IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I'VE ASKED OF ANYONE.
ARE YOU SURE? THERE HAS TO BE SOMEONE BETTER.
THERE'S NO ONE BETTER.
I TRUST YOU MORE THAN ANYONE.
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T DEAL WITH.
"WE DIDN'T REALIZE THEN, BUT IT WAS A MISSION BRIEFING *FOR MY WHOLE LIFE.*"

ANY TIME I STUMBLE, I GO BACK TO THAT. HE TRUSTED ME TO FINISH THIS.
I *WILL* FINISH THIS.
I NEED TO BE A JEDI, LEIA.
I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE. I...FEEL IT.
DO YOU LISTEN TO YOURSELF? "*I FEEL IT*"?
I "*FEEL THINGS*" ALL THE TIME.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I FEEL MOST?
DUTY. AND KNOWING THAT I HAVE TO LIVE UP TO IT.
WE DON'T ALL GET TO BE DREAMERS.
DARTH VADER KILLED MY FATHER. HE KILLED OBI-WAN. HE'S KILLED SO MANY.
I'LL NEVER AVENGE THEM UNLESS I AM A JEDI.
I *NEED* TO BE A JEDI.
THIS *IS* PRACTICAL.

ARE YOU *SURE* THIS IS THE WAY TO THE CHASM?
WE COULD HAVE BEEN LOST FOR THE LAST HOUR AND NEVER KNOW...
FEEL THE TEMPERATURE RISE. WE'RE GETTING NEARER TO THE CHASM.
AND...LOOK INSIDE YOURSELF, JEDI.
LISTEN.
I'M... *IT'S* GETTING WORSE.
THE DESECRATION OF THE FORCE IS A MAGNET.
IT DRAWS US LOST SOULS TO THE HEART OF THE DARKNESS.

GRRRHH!
WHAT IS THAT THING?!
SAND SLUG. IT'S A HERBIVORE. IT SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THIS.
THE DARKNESS HAS DISTEMPERED HIM...
HEY! OVER HERE!
ON... TOP OF ME.

SZZZZZZK
KKRRRRNK
LUKE?

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, AT LEAST I WASN'T CRUSHED.
ON THE OTHER...UGH. UGH.
EVEN HERE, THE FORCE MOVES THROUGH YOU...
IT IS...
IT'S NOT THE FORCE THAT I KNOW.
IT IS.
IT IS *STILL* THE FORCE, PILGRIM. IT IS WHAT IT IS AND YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE.
YOU ARE HERE TO JOIN US IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH.
WE'RE NOT. WE'RE JUST HERE TO TALK.
HEH.

YOU ARE MISTAKEN.

STAR WARS™
NEXT ISSUE:

Tour
THE SEVEN SEAS
With
BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
Call 555-FISH